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original connection with *tutta* as a neuter, the *a* came to be looked upon as the connecting vowel in place of *e*, and when the full *tutti* was again used, its use as a neuter ending was forgotten entirely, and it was thought of only as this connecting vowel.

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The Nature and Elements of Poetry. By EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892. 8vo, pp. xx, 338.

THIS volume, as the author tells us in his Introduction, includes the series of lectures delivered at the Johns Hopkins University, on the Percy Turnbull Memorial Foundation. The lectures have also been presented, from month to month, in the columns of *The Century Magazine*. The author points with honest pride to the fact that the Turnbull Foundation was "the first endowed lectureship of poetry in the United States; and the second throughout the universities of the English-speaking world." In the discussion before him, the author proposes to treat "of the quality and attributes of poetry itself . . . to present poetry in the concrete . . . its essence and incarnation" even at the risk, as he modestly states, of "threshing old straw." Viewing all poetry as divisible into "creation and self-expression," and wisely avoiding any detailed discussion of "schools and fashions," he deals with the "primal nature" of the poetic art. The treatise is presented in eight distinct chapters or papers as follows: Oracles Old and New; What is Poetry; Creation and Self-Expression; Melancholia; Beauty; Truth; Imagination; The Faculty Divine. Insisting, at the outset, that poetry is a force and not made by any *a priori* rules but by "nature and the foreordaining stars," he attempts, by a careful survey of the history of critical opinion, to reach "a serviceable definition" of the art. Reviewing thus the teachings of Plato, Horace, Goethe, Byron, Mill, Ruskin, Wordsworth, Emerson, Lander, Watts, and others, he gives us as his final word on the subject the following: "Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention,

taste, thought, passion and insight of the human soul." More specially and tersely, he speaks of the poet as a "revealer"; of poetry, as an "expression of the beautiful"; of feeling, as "the excitant of genuine poetry"; of poetry, as "ideal expression through words"; as either "impersonal or self-expressive"; as seen, especially, in Hebraic and Hellenic verse. In the paper on Melancholia, special stress is laid upon the "subjective undertone" of such authors as Dante and Milton; upon the romantic movement in modern English and Continental verse, and upon the "major and minor keys of lyric song" as heard in the touch of Mr. Browning and Matthew Arnold, and Swinburne "the most subjective of contemporary poets." While there is "no inevitable relation between disease and genius," the author contends for the presence of that "sublime seriousness" which is often the clearest expression of "the sadness of great souls." Some definite idea of what constitutes beauty in poetry is then sought and the critic takes occasion, once again, as in former writings, to exalt construction above mere ornamentation.

In treating of the relations of beauty and truth, timely caution is given against the tendency to make the didactic obtrusive in verse, as Wordsworth and Thompson did, while full praise is paid to that higher didacticism, the poetry of wisdom, which is so signally seen in the Book of Ecclesiastes, as, also, in Tennyson, Browning and Emerson.

Imagination as "the essential key to expression" is then discussed, and the volume closes with a clear presentation of passion, insight, genius and faith as those high and natural forms in which "The Faculty Divine" manifests itself. Such, in brief, is the drift of the discussion in hand, a discussion in which the accomplished author holds himself closely to his theme and seeks to secure and express tenable views.

Were we bent on finding ground for adverse criticism, we might modestly question the exclusive validity of the definition of poetry as given, in that, on the one hand, it is too comprehensive in its statement of separate factors and, also, not sufficiently definite in its use of the word, rhythmical. The term, metrical,

would possibly better express the differentiation between poetry and prose, or poetry and poetical prose.

It might further be hinted, that the word *Melancholia*, as a synonym for subjectivity, even in the minor strain, is not always a just or happy one, its range being restricted and exceptional in the highest verse. Mr. Arnold's phrase, "intellectual seriousness" or the author's own phrase, "a sublime seriousness" is a better one.

Mr. Stedman's high laudation of Whitman, in this as in other volumes from his pen, is to us somewhat surprising, and yet we must not too stoutly demur, while, here and there, are passages which seem to be incapable of a clear interpretation. We hasten on to words of praise, and note two or three characteristic merits. There is evident, throughout, that independence of judgment which is an essential requisite of successful criticism, despite the fact that it is so rarely found. With all due deference to the history of opinion upon the various authors and questions coming under review, Mr. Stedman courteously insists upon his own views, reached, as they have been, by patient thought and reading, and based upon the accepted canons of literary criticism. Not infrequently he finds himself unable to endorse conclusions which have the sanction of age and high authority, and makes no hesitation in uttering his dissent with reasons therefore.

In fact, had not the author done this, a discussion of the nature of poetry would not have been needed, in that it has been so generally treated by ancient and modern students of letters. Moreover, the author is not ashamed to modify opinions which he himself has formerly held, remembering that it is the duty of the true critic, as of the student of truth, at times, to unlearn what he has learned, or to present antecedent convictions in new form by reason of new evidence. A further excellence apparent in this treatise is that it is a thoroughly intellectual presentation of artistic truth, a philosophic discussion of poetic art. The author assures us, at the outset, that he is to proceed after this higher method, seeking "primal elements," those fundamental facts on which the process of generalization may safely be based. The very title of the treatise demands this. If the plan and purpose are in a sense elementary, the author hastens to

add, "that the simplest laws and constituents are also the most profound and abiding."

This is done, moreover, in anything but that unduly didactic manner which the discussion itself so sharply condemns as applied to the criticism of literature. Copious and pertinent illustration saves the pages from every trace of the prosaic and invests a somewhat difficult subject with genuine interest. This combination of maturity of judgment with delicacy of taste is as rare as it is desirable. Many critics, especially of verse, utterly fail in effecting it, while they only are masters in the art who have the faculty of philosophic and of literary insight, and know how to be critically profound without being dull, and critically æsthetic without being superficial.

This is a feature of all Mr. Stedman's work, by which the art with which he deals is made to appear as a scientific and yet an attractive one, and widely removed from so much of that journalistic criticism of the day which sacrifices fact to preference and seeks, at all hazards, to make literary censorship readable.

We notice, further, and with peculiar interest, the author's earnest plea for poetry, for the inherent excellence and world-wide mission of verse. The volume is, indeed, an outgrowth of the conviction that poetry was losing ground in general esteem and that "under stress of public neglect or distaste, the lovers of any cause or art find their regard for it more unshaken than ever." Even in literature, as he intimates, he finds these counter tendencies, and writes at a time "when poetry is strenuously rivalled by other forms of expression, especially, by pure fiction." He, therefore, takes up his pen in behalf of a failing cause and, in the old chivalric spirit of a loyal knight, contends courageously in its defence. He deals with poetry as "a voice of the future" as well as of the past, and would exalt the principles of these "practical idealists" who still believe in the prophet and the bard.

Hence, the hopefulness of his outlook as he closes his survey. "For one," he says, "I believe that the last age of imaginative production is not past; that poetry is to retain, as of old, its literary import, and from time to time, to prove itself a force in national life." With Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier and Tennyson gone, some of us may fail to see the signs

of continuous poetic life, and yet 'tis well to have our forebodings allayed by the positive convictions of one who has a right to know. The discussion before us is thus as stimulating as it is substantial. It lifts the student of verse to higher levels and wider vision, and may be said to be a sound and serviceable contribution to the special department that it represents.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

OLD ENGLISH *scúrheard*.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—Since reading Dr. Pearce's note in MOD. LANG. NOTES for November, two or three observations occur to me which it may be worth while to communicate.

1. It is not unlikely that OE. *heard* in compounds should oftener be translated by Pearce's 'terrible,' 'dreadful,' than has usually been the case in the lexicons and glossaries.

2. This is especially worthy to be inquired into in the case of epithets applied to offensive, as distinguished from defensive, weapons.

3. Were this carried out consistently, it might suggest a transfer of several instances of simple *heard* from Grein's first meaning to his second or fourth.

4. In favor of this last suggestion is the commonest meaning of the adv. *hearde* in Grein.

5. The fact that there is a copious poetical vocabulary in Old Norse, often presenting remarkable analogies with that of Old English, should not be forgotten in such discussion. It happens that there is a poetical epithet in O. N., beginning with *skúr*, which may throw light upon our compound. I refer to *skurörðigr*, where *skúr* is in a dative construction, such as would better suit Pearce's sixth or eleventh sense, and not an instrumental construction, such as it required by most of the other explanations. This O. N. adjective, which occurs only once in the Edda, according to Egilsson and Cleasby-Vigfusson, is translated by the former as 'obnitens procellæ, vento,' that is, 'breasting the storm, or wind,'

where it is evident that the case of *skúr* can not be regarded as instrumental.

6. It will be noted that *fýrheard*, which Pearce adduced as a parallel, does not refer to an offensive weapon, but to a portion of the helmet. Of course it is not to be denied that *heard* sometimes has its literal sense in the poetical texts.

7. Will not these considerations enable us to get rid, once for all, of the 'scouring,' 'shower of blows from a hammer,' and perhaps of Dr. Pearce's 'shower' in the sense of 'rain-water'?

ALBERT S. COOK.

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OLD ENGLISH *scúrheard*.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—The first four paragraphs of the preceding notes seem to admit of no special adverse criticism.

Dr. Cook rests his case, to a great extent, upon the O. N. *skúr-örðigr*, a compound which seems to me hardly pertinent for comparison, because

1. It does not seem to be applied to a weapon, either offensive or defensive; and

2. It seems to me that in *skúr-örðigr*, the dative construction of *skúr* is due primarily to *örðigr* (here=*obnitens*); and that *skúr-örðigr*, therefore, can hardly throw any light upon *scúrheard*, where the second part of the compound has a meaning very dissimilar to that of the corresponding part of the O. N. word.

In spite of Dr. Cook's sixth and seventh paragraphs, the rejection of the interpretation that I have suggested for *scúrheard*, leaves *fýrheard* an independent and vexatious problem; but the adoption of my suggestion would clear the latter of all difficulties, for then *scúrheard* and *fýrheard* would represent two different views of one operation.

I am not sure of the strict correctness of my former statement that no instances could be cited of OE. *scúr*=*rainwater*, for there are several passages where this force seems more or less distinctly implied. There is an instructive apposition in "Daniel," 349-50: